

# Manx Notes 97 (2007)

“A CHILD WITHOUT NAME AM I!”

A MIGRATORY LEGEND RECOLLECTED BY AGNES HERBERT

There is a quaintly charming story of an old Manxman passing Arbory Church at midnight one Christmas Eve, and as he came level with the giant fuchsia hedge which borders the vicarage garden, he heard a soft low wailing, piteously insistent, coming from the shadowy graveyard. As he drew nearer and nearer, the trailing gentle murmur took voice and words, the sad greiving lament of an unchristened infant: “Lhiannoo dyn ennym me! Lhiannoo dyn ennym me!” said the quiet sighing breath over and over again. (A child without name am I! A child without name am I!)

The old man paused by the wall, and looking up towards the old kirk, with its white bell-turret outlined in the moonlight, he said clearly, and very tenderly: “My she gilley eu, ta mee bashtey eu Juan, as my she innenn eu ta me bashtey eu Joney.” (If thou art a boy, I christen thee John, and if thou art a girl I christen thee Joney.)

With a happy sigh, like the wind sinking to rest, the little ghost lay content and at peace.

Source: Agnes Herbert, *The Isle of Man* (London: John Lane, 1909) 185.



Agnes Herbert reproduces in her book *The Isle of Man* (1909) a version of the Dead-Child Legend (ml 4025). Four other versions are known from Man and have been previously collected together.<sup>1</sup> Here, the legend is associated with Arbory Church, rather than with Columb Killey.

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VIENNA, 2007

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRINTED SOURCES

Miller, Stephen. “Norwegian Dead-Child Legends in Mann (ML 4025).” *Béaloides* 69 (2001): 107–14.



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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Miller, “Norwegian Dead-Child Legends in Mann (ML 4025),” *Béaloides* 69 (2001).